

Saxophone Study with Gerard Weber

Address: 2216 Broadway Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7J 0Y6

Phone: 306-361-7994

E-mail: gerard.weber81@gmail.com

Website: <http://gerardweber.ca/>

DESCRIPTION:

This syllabus is designed to be flexible for students of all ages and levels of experience, from early beginners to experienced musicians. Students will acquire proper technique and skills required for saxophone playing and build upon this strong foundation through practice and performance.

Goals:

Students will also learn fundamental concepts of music theory and music history. Music theory is essential for understanding the language of music so that we may read, write, and speak it proficiently. Music history supplements the theoretical knowledge by revealing to us the origins of our favourite music today. Our music today has been historically shaped by musicians of the past. Historical knowledge enriches our musical decisions and connections we form when we share music with others.

Benefits:

Private lessons are highly beneficial for a number of reasons. In the band classroom, music teachers cannot afford to give the individual attention students need with their own instruments, and as a result, students develop poor playing habits that can hinder their progress and discourage them from staying in band. A private instructor ensures a strong foundation for technique by eliminating bad habits and giving students the instrument-specific instruction they need to be successful. Private instruction nurtures the musical thinking process, which complements critical thinking skills, creativity, confidence in oneself, and leadership skills.

Studio Policy and Rates:

Lessons will take place at my home studio. Lessons will be held once a week and will take place after school hours (3:30pm) or on the weekends. Lesson rates as of July 2016 are \$50/hour and \$25/half-hour.

Most students take the summers off after the school year has finished; however I am available to teach over the summers if interested. Lessons must be paid in advance (cash, cheque, or E-transfer) for one month at the first lesson of each month.¹ I am able to issue receipts if requested.

¹ Payment schedule and arrangements may be adjusted to suit the family's needs if necessary.

Missed Lessons:

Lessons missed by the student will not be refunded except in cases of serious illness or family emergencies. Lessons missed by the teacher will be discussed between the teacher and parents and rescheduled at a time that is convenient for the family and the teacher. I will allow one “freebie” lesson if I am informed at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled lesson of a student absence.

Please plan to show up at least five minutes early to each lesson. Proper set up and clean up takes time out of the lessons, and punctuality ensures that lesson time is used efficiently. If I am running late, I will make sure that the student receives the full hour or half-hour of lesson time.

Studio Performances/Master Classes:

Weber Studio performances/master classes will be held twice a year: once in winter before Christmas holidays, and once in spring before school is done in June. This is an opportunity for students to perform in front of a supportive audience and demonstrate the hard work that they have put into preparing music throughout the year. For master classes, I will bring in a guest clinician to listen to each student interested in performing and work one-on-one with the student in front of an audience for 15-20 minutes. This is a great opportunity for students to hear advice from different people and perspectives and for parents to witness the learning process firsthand. Student participation is strongly encouraged but not mandatory.

OBJECTIVES:

Development and progress in lessons is achieved through practice. “Practice makes perfect,” but only through “perfect practice” will we come anywhere close to perfection. Focused practice with clear goals in mind will help students make progress outside of lessons. Those who apply goal-oriented practice methods achieve more in one hour than those who practice aimlessly for four hours. Students will learn practice techniques to help them make the most of their practice time and experience noticeable results. Practice time amounts will be recommended based on student experience and level. Practice journals may be used to keep track of practice goals.

In addition to proper saxophone technique, students will develop musicality, including the independence to make musical decisions on their own. Musicality involves a blend of knowledge, technique, and intuition. Exploring and developing musicality greatly enriches the music-making process, keeping the activity of music fun and fulfilling.

Music Festival:

Students are encouraged to perform in their local music festival, which is organized and funded by the Saskatchewan Music Festival Association. Music Festival provides learning musicians with an environment to share music with others and learn how to excel as musicians and on their instrument from visiting professional adjudicators. Students will also have a chance to collaborate with a pianist and enjoy

the experience of working with another musician. I would be happy to recommend piano accompanists for Music Festival participation and attend rehearsals with the accompanists free of charge. For more information on the Saskatchewan Music Festival Association and local Music Festivals, visit <http://www.smfa.ca/>

MATERIALS:

Students must come prepared to play in lessons with a saxophone in good working condition. Saxophones, like any machine such as a car or a bicycle, require routine maintenance for optimal performance. Leaks (caused by pads that do not seal completely) are a major source of frustration for saxophonists and make the instrument difficult to play. Instruments in need of maintenance can be taken to Musicraft Instrument Repair (owned and operated by Kevin Junk) in Saskatoon or St. John's Music.

Mouthpieces and Reeds, and Cleaning Supplies:

Two of the most significant pieces of equipment that affect saxophone tone are the mouthpiece and the reed. Students are encouraged to purchase intermediate or professional-level mouthpieces. A professional level mouthpiece can make a poor-quality saxophone produce a reasonably good tone. Professional mouthpieces (if cared for properly) last many years and present students with the best opportunity for success. Recommended mouthpieces will be addressed in lessons.

Saxophone reeds are the most important pieces of equipment for sound production. Students are recommended to purchase high-quality saxophone reeds from brand names such as Vandoren and Rico. Poor reeds are the cause of bad habits that can take years to eliminate. Most often young saxophonists are given reeds that are too soft to play on and never move up to harder reeds. High-quality reeds last much longer and provide students with the best opportunity to be successful with the saxophone.

Reed strengths vary from brand to brand. For example, a Vandoren reed of strength 3 will generally play the same as a Rico Royal reed strength 3½. Students should avoid playing on reeds below a strength of 2½. Recommended brands are (in ranked order): Vandoren ("blue box" or V12: blue box reeds are available for individual purchase), Rico Reserve, and Rico Royal. Reeds are incredibly delicate and must be taken care of properly. Proper reed care will be addressed early on in lessons.

Other materials required for saxophone study are a neck strap, body cleaning swab, and cork grease (on occasion). These materials are provided when renting a saxophone from music stores such as St. John's Music or Long & McQuade. Proper cleaning and maintenance are necessary to ensure that the saxophone remains in good working order. Tips for proper saxophone care will be addressed in lessons.

Music:

Students interested in performing in Music Festival will need to purchase sheet music for the selections they wish to perform. Music Festival rules state that

performers must perform from an original score of the music (this includes the saxophonist and the accompanist) and provide a second copy for the adjudicators to read from (both score and individual part). I will make sure to have a second copy for students to borrow for performances.